

## Baird Examines Misplaced Priorities in President's FY 2009 Budget (February 5, 2008)

Washington, D.C. - Congressman

Brian Baird (WA-03), a member of the House Budget Committee, released the following statement on the President's FY 2009 Budget:

"Today, the Administration unveiled its FY 2009 Budget which will clearly add to our country's deficit and take away from America's greatest needs. The proposed budget fails to meet the needs of our communities, school systems, and law enforcement agencies and places a greater economic burden on all Americans.

"As Chairman of Subcommittee on Research and Science Education, I was pleased that the President's budget included an increase of \$822 million to the National Science Foundation (over FY 2008 levels) to \$6.85 billion. Unfortunately, this increase in funding only applies to basic research at the National Science Foundation and vastly underfunds Robert Noyce scholarships and Math and Science Partnerships to train STEM teachers and students, priorities included in last year's landmark America COMPETES Act.

"Another key initiative for our nation, funding for national parks increased to \$2.4 billion. As co-founder of the Congressional National Parks Caucus, I was pleased that the President's proposal includes a \$161 million increase for the annual operating needs of our national parks. However, it is unfortunate the President has failed to include investments in construction and land acquisition projects that are vital to sustaining our cherished national parks.

"While I praise the President's decision to increase funding in national park investments and the National Science Foundation, the proposed budget fails to consider key priorities of residents in Southwest Washington.

"Since entering Congress, I have advocated for the sales tax deduction for the state of Washington. I am gravely disappointed to see that the sales tax deduction was not extended through FY 2009 in the President's budget plan, meaning that hardworking taxpayers throughout Washington State will see their federal income taxes increase. As a champion of sales tax deductibility, I believe this extension is critical to helping millions of middle class Americans and Washingtonians save money- and I will continue to fight to ensure that Americans get the

tax incentives they need to pay for college, heat their homes, invest in our economy.

"As a co-founder of the Career and Technical Education Caucus, I have diligently worked to ensure that students, educators, administrators and the general public understand the importance of improving CTE programs to invest in a competitive global economy. The President's decision to not include funding for Perkins Career and Technical Education Loans in the budget will indeed cripple vocational education. These federal loans provide critical help to schools providing career and technical educational opportunities to their students and this lack of investment in America's growing workforce is truly disheartening.

"The Budget proposal offered today also fails to invest in our local law enforcement and methamphetamine initiatives. Once again, our President has failed to adequately fund the Byrne JAG program or the Community Oriented Policing (COPS) program, which are both essential to bolstering law enforcement, corrections, and drug treatment programs. As co-founder of Congressional Caucus to Control and Fight Methamphetamine, it is imperative that local law enforcement officials have the funding, resources, and tools required to fight meth domestically and internationally.

"Another blow to Southwest Washington is the President's decision to slash funding for the Army Corps of Engineers. In the outlined proposal, total funding is cut from \$5.586 billion to \$4.741 billion. This lack of investment would severely impact the safety of our waterways and projects in Southwest Washington such as the Columbia River dredging and port improvements.

"It is clear that if passed, the President's FY 2009 Budget proposal would fail to meet the needs of the American public and create deficits for our economy that are skyrocketing out of control. Our national budget should reflect the priorities of helping Americans cover energy costs, pay college tuition, and invest in local infrastructure projects and our environment, instead of creating larger deficits for our children and grandchildren to pay for.

"Finally, while the President has cut funding for critical programs, his tax cuts combined with his presidential earmarks and spending for his own programs result in a deficit that would exceed \$410 billion and that is not counting the \$150 billion stimulus program or the hundreds of billions of dollars borrowed from social security or the anticipated request for funding for the war. The result is a budget that underfunds vital areas, but still creates one of the largest deficits in the history of the country. Fortunately, Congress is certain to enact a more responsible budget than what the President has put forward, and as a member of the Budget Committee, I look forward to

working to achieve that goal."

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